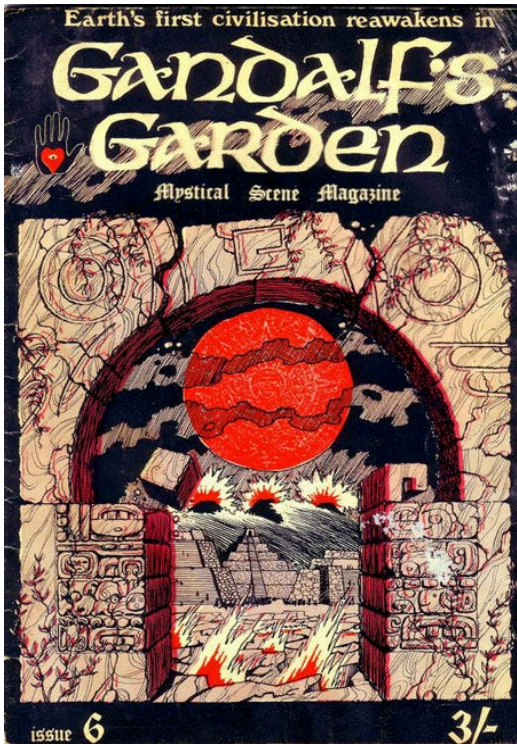
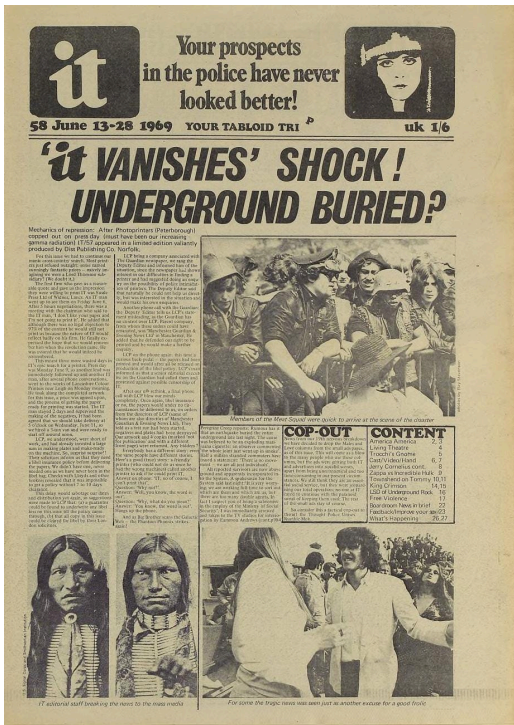


# Punk



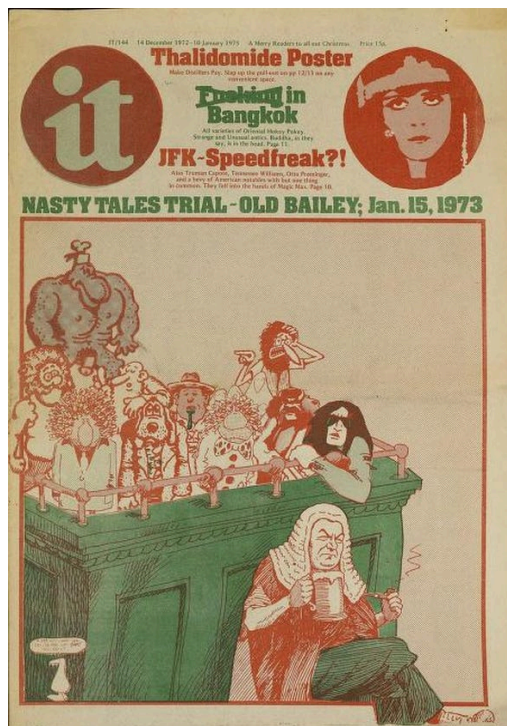
The thinning of the barrier between reality and dreams, the impact of Situationism, Dada, Surrealism, Anarchism, the no man's land betwixt and between fact and fiction. The wearing down of my weary brain under the impact of special religious brainwashing and generic secular spatial temporal conditioning. The coming at you from every direction-ness of mindfuck.



In a sense it's true to say that I was completely unaware of Punk in the mid-1970s. I mean, I was aware that something was going to happen at some stage to rebel against "old hippies". That was inevitable. For several years popular culture had been in a transition stage of hippy anarchist-surrealist underground newspapers like "IT" and "OZ" and "The East Village Other" and "Gandalf's Garden". The Alternative Society was being popularly referred to as the "Freak Scene" and remnants of 1960s Flower Power lived cheek by jowl in squats with heavy rock fans and comic book nerds, religious cultists, folkies, radicals and progressives. The beginnings of D.I.Y. culture were happening all around us and the Pink Fairies screamed "Rock and roll, And the message is, do it, You're gonna rip me off man, You blew it, do it, do it, do it, do it, do it"

Older people told us that they had been there in Brighton in the 1960s when sinister people claiming to be "journalists" had paid Mods and Rockers to fight each other. There was a widespread belief that we were all being manipulated by the government and the police. Herding us into pop music fashions to fight tribal battles against each other. Elton John told us "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting" and Paul McCartney told us to "Live and Let Die". I invented an imaginary fashion/subculture called Boksters. The important thing about Boksters was that it would never be REAL and thus would never be part of the government's manipulations.

There had been some attempts to bring subcultures together. International Times alternative rockers had reached out to the UK Hells Angels and to skinheads with the plea that we should all unite against the capitalist industrial military state and stand together in the name of anarchy and freedom. It was a thing but, nevertheless, there was inevitable mistrust and it was still not punk as such.



When punk began to happen I was being hypnotised and brainwashed in a pseudo-religious cult. There many of these new (and old) cults following on from the mysticism of the hippy movement and the combination of pacifism and religious gullibility had led us into the monster's lair. Big Brother was winding up his clockwork orange, time was and so was mind control. Something needed to change.

In 1976 I was 23 years old. Born in the 1950s like Johnny Rotten, Siouxsie Sioux, Joe Strummer, Adam Ant, Tony Blair, Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Bill Gates.

I went out on a date with a woman who was also being brainwashed in the same pseudo-religious cult, "The Emin Society". She went by the assumed name of "Isis" and had a Louise Brooks hairstyle. She lived near Parliament Hill Fields, sharing a flat with another Emin woman who styled herself with the name "Zenda" and had a Purdy Cut.

I remember "Isis" had a Rolling Stones album "Sticky Fingers" (with the zip") on prominent display in her flat and I remember that she asked my opinion as to whether she should "go punk". I had no clue what she was talking about. I didn't watch television, didn't listen to the radio, didn't read newspapers. I also didn't like Isis very much. In Emin meetings she pretended to be very "priestess-like" but outside of meetings became vulgar and embarrassing. I knew I wouldn't be asking her out again. I felt like I needed to find someone genuinely religious and spiritual. Someone who wasn't just putting on an act all the time. The first punks that I saw were walking down Hotham Road, Putney in a gang as I was walking up Hotham Road in the other direction and on the other side. I was wearing a pinstripe suit, smart shirt and tie and baseball boots. They were dressed in torn and ripped clothing and had spikey freaked coloured hair. I thought they were students doing rag week. I smiled at them, thinking that it was for charity, and gave them the thumbs up. They pointed at me.

I continued on my way and went into "The Mixing Chamber", the building where The Emin had its meetings.

I continued on with my life, still unaware that punk existed. In 1977 I was temporally out of The Emin while I had a nervous breakdown caused by the stress of being under continuous mind control. For several months I sat at home in my mum's house just staring into space for hours and hours, sleeping about 2 hours out of every 24 and becoming increasingly fatigued and zombie-like, while thoughts raced around inside my brain saying "Something's wrong, something's wrong, what's wrong?" and "I can't think, my brain won't work, what's wrong with me?" and "It's all a conspiracy and people are telepathic and I'm not telepathic but other people are and there's something going on and I don't know what it is" etc. etc.

When I recovered from the breakdown my older sister offered me a job in a petrol station. She was the manager (or "manageress" as they used to call it in those days) and she hired me to work as the cashier on the night shift at Nine Elms Service Station in South London. By then we were in 1978.

The Nine Elms Service Station had a thing called an "Agency Card". It meant that Metropolitan Police vehicles could fill up with petrol from our pumps and pay for it "on agency".

Civilian customers who came in to buy petrol were full of jocular merriment (to coin a phrase) and seemed unusually fond of the words "Have you got it?" Customer after customer came to the little kiosk window and paid with cash or credit cards or cheques and then paused to ask me "Have you got it?" I began to think that these were the words we had to say. One night I asked "Have you got it?" to one of the uniform policemen as he paid for his petrol "on agency" and, surprised, he replied "Ha ha, I don't want it!" Then one night I witnessed an assault.

A man came walking along the road on the opposite side from the petrol station and then a second man came up very quickly behind him, knocked him down and kicked him in the head several times, then ran off. The attacker was wearing a long raincoat and big boots. He had spikey sticking up hair. I didn't know it at the time but he was the dead spit of Sid Vicious. I mean, he probably was Sid Vicious.

I called an ambulance and a police car arrived. They ambulance men brought the victim into the petrol station under the policeman's instructions, laid the injured man on the floor and began to tend his wounds. The policeman asked me for a description of the attacker. When I said that the attacker had "spikey sticking up hair" the policemen asked me "Was he a punk?" I didn't know what that meant and I was puzzled as to why a British 1970s policeman was speaking in what seemed to be 1920s American slang. That fact that I didn't know what he meant by "a punk" made the policeman look at me with suspicion and puzzlement. During the next few years I worked in several different petrol stations which my sister was managing. Nine Elms, Surbiton, New Maldon and on Saturdays, knowing I hated sport and wanting to have a sick joke on me, she made me work as an Esso blue uniformed pump attendant in the petrol station across the road from Chelsea Football Ground so that I would have football fans all day long asking me who I thought would win the match. I never knew who was even playing in the match, let alone who would win it. Customers kept up a steady stream of jocular comments such as "Fill her up Jacko!", "Will it reach?" and "Oh dear, soon be a pound a gallon!"

In the New Malden station a small group of punks had begun to hang around the petrol station because they knew one of the other pump attendants and because they had nothing better to do. They enjoyed ridiculing my religious beliefs and the "stick" which they apparently believed me to have "up my arse".

By then, of course, I had figured out what they meant by "Punk" and I could see how it fitted into the general pattern of alternative society progression. By 1980 I was working in a Shell station in South Wimbledon and had begun to feel conscious of the fact that I had been brainwashed. I had seen clips and posters from movies like "Breaking Glass" and "Times Square" and I began to yearn to be outside in the cold and rain. The Emin mind control had made me feel as though I was wrapped up in cotton wool and my brain was numbed. I believe that they didn't only use hypnosis but also that they were putting some kind of mind control drug in the tea. I needed to get away from the Emin and I needed to leave my job and be back outside in the freezing rain again on a Glastonbury hillside.

So I left the Emin. I still worked in petrol stations for a while. I had justified this to my environmentalist principles by the rationalisation that, since I had never actually driven a car myself and since the customers would buy the same amount of petrol if someone else was

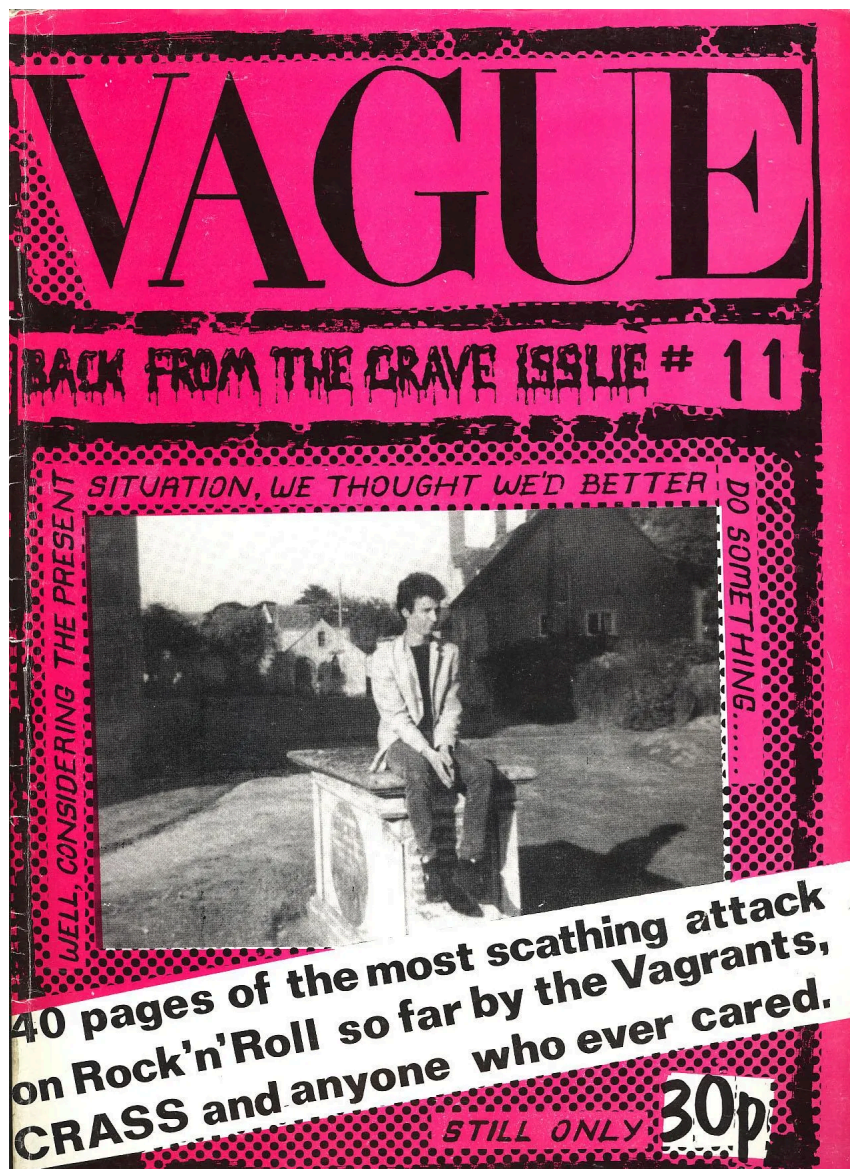


working there instead of me, I was not actually increasing the amount of oil being drilled or petroleum being used. So the environment wasn't any worse off by me working in those jobs.

John Lennon was shot in New York. I was standing at a bus stop crying my eyes out. Being no longer under Emin control meant that I was free to move out of my mum's house and get a flat in South London.

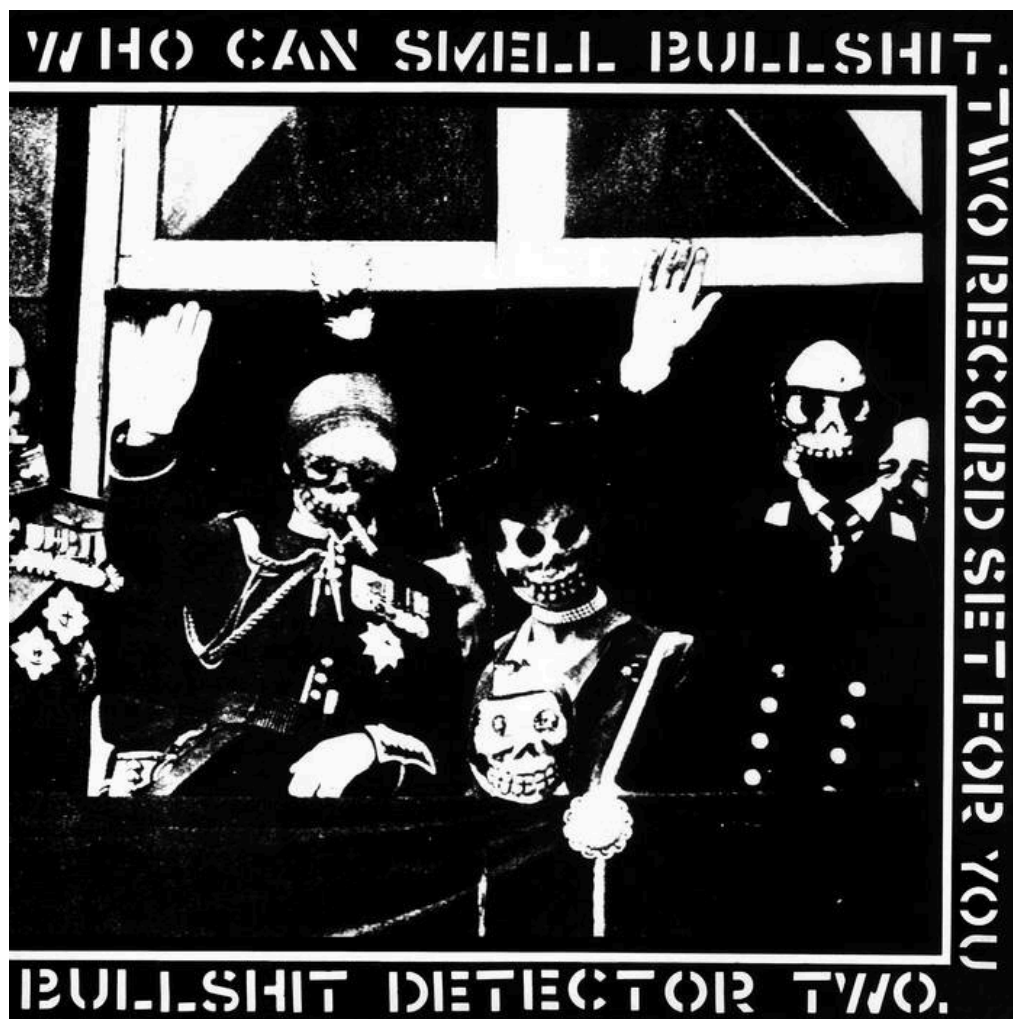
I moved from Morden to Clapham. I visited Geoff Gilbertson in Glastonbury and, through him, I got to know punks who lived in Bath. Since the last time I'd seen him he'd become a published author of a book called "The Dark Gods" with Anthony Roberts. People who knew Geoff thought it hilarious that he now knew The Stranglers because they had read his book and that he was, apparently, "really getting in with them".

My life then included a lot of travelling back and forth between London and Bath. I bought this copy of Vague:



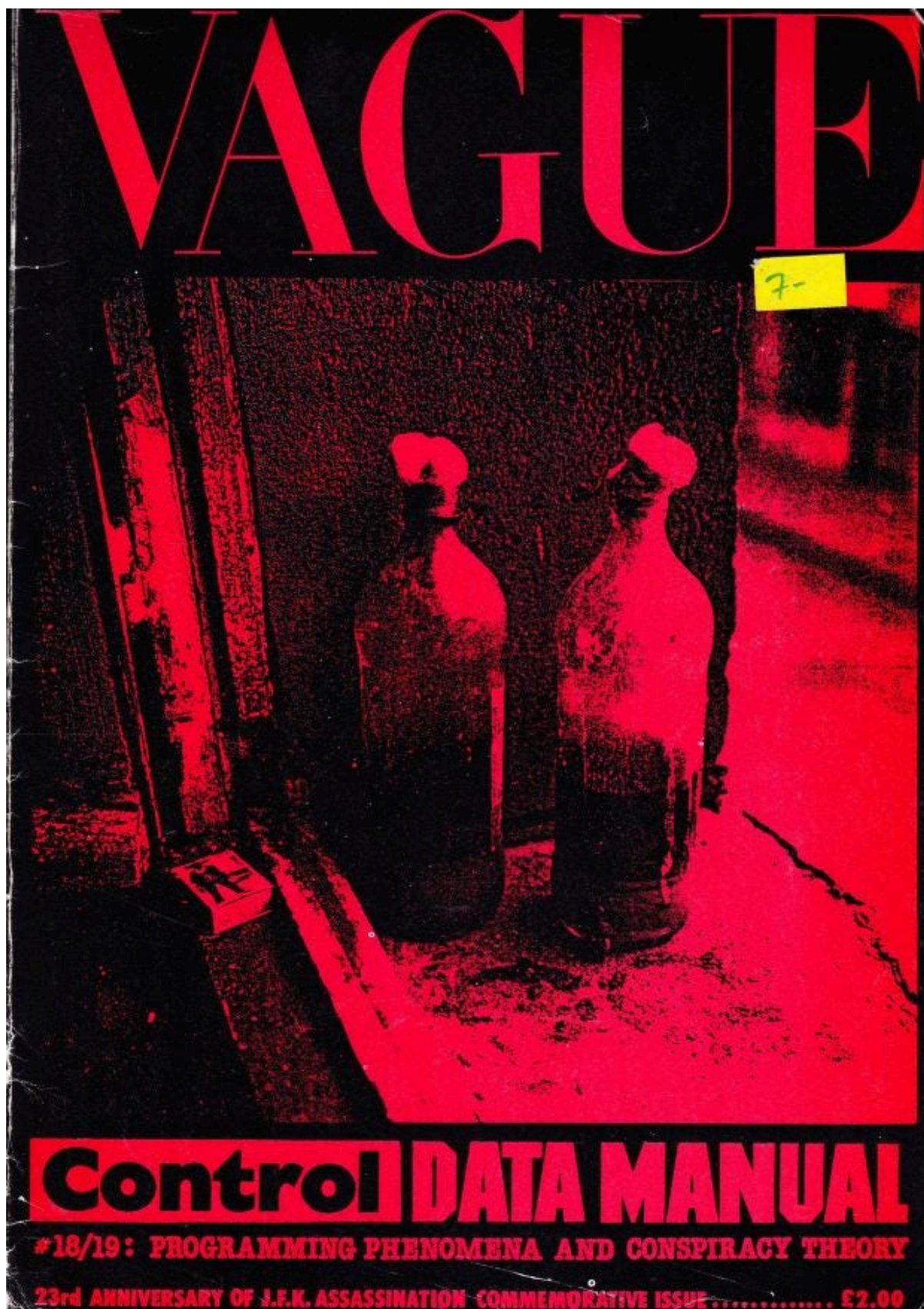
I began to go to animal rights meetings and made friends with some local activists. I found the Crass Records album "Bullshit Detector Two" and began to learn about Punk anarchism in the 80s. I went to one of the Crass squat gigs at I think, The Venue in Victoria. bands were Crass, Dirt, Flux of Pink Indians, Poison Girls (I think.... I'm having memory problems about the exact lineup.... it was long time ago) I remember a thing where they played some old music clips of bands from the past like The Beatles and others in a sequence leading up to Dirt being like the latest hot band or something. It was a rubbish idea and nobody liked it (but the band were okay I suppose).

I went to demos against Cruise missiles, against South African apartheid, against Trident submarines, against animal experiments etc.



My mind was still mixed up from the brainwashing and I found it hard to adjust to how much people were swearing. In the 80s it seemed that almost everyone was describing the world in terms of what was "fucking great" and what was "fucking shit". I was aware that I was suffering from culture shock. Not much I could do about it though. I was, and am, to some extent, still a six year old Sunday School boy at the Methodist Church in Belmont, Surrey.



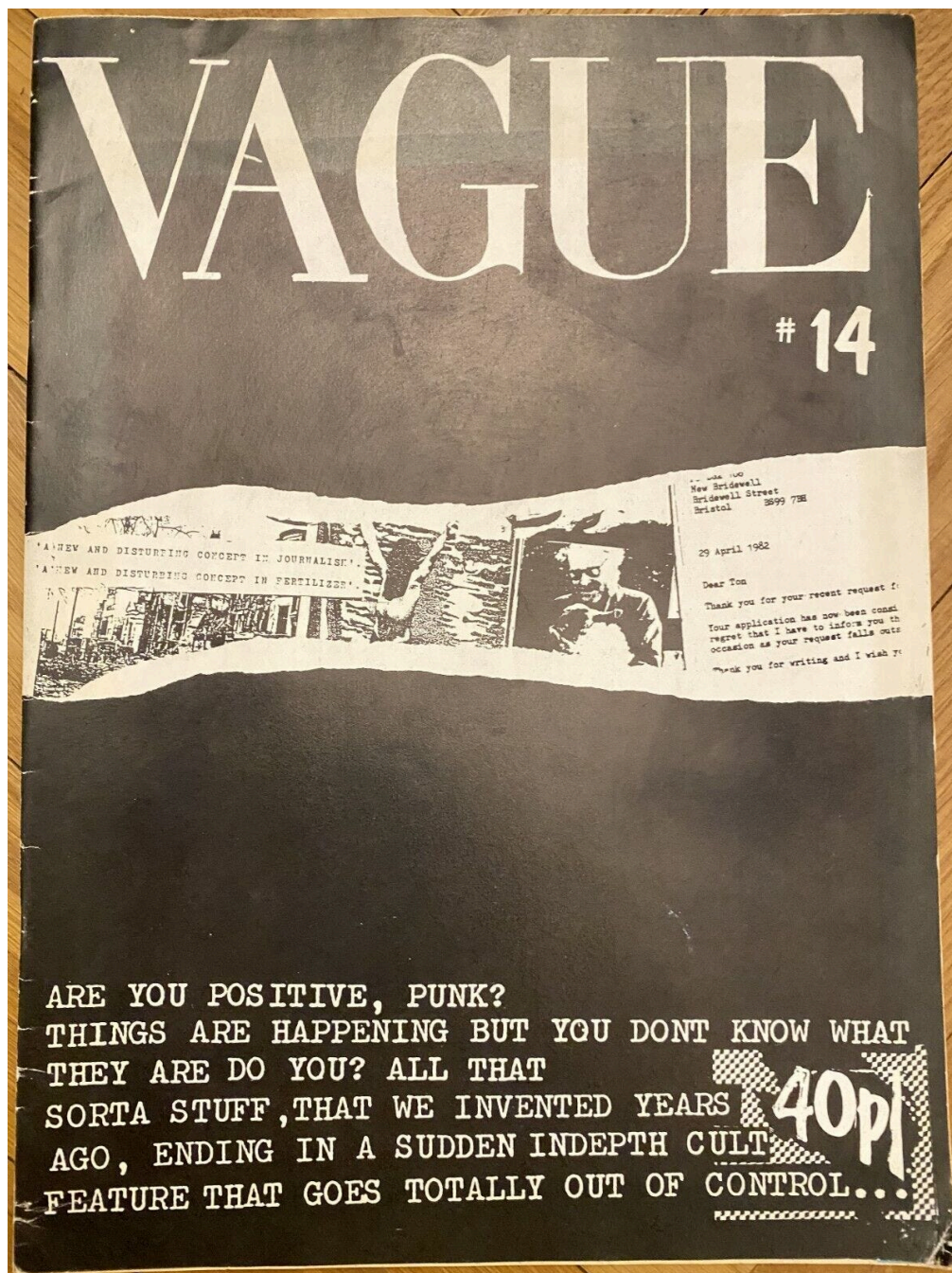


I got arrested for "obstructing the police in the course of their duty" during an anti fur coats protest at the Miss UK Contest, Cunard Hotel, Hammersmith. Prior to the arrest a bouncer



had punched me repeatedly in the side of my head and then physically picked me up and thrown me through the air so that I landed on my head. I was temporarily unconscious. I was 29.

When the case came up in the magistrate's court I was accused of being a hunt saboteur. I didn't know what that was, I had never heard of hunt saboteurs and I said so. This caused the magistrate to laugh out load at me because he imagined I must be lying. I wasn't though. After the court proceedings some of the animal activists explained to me what sabs were all about. Even they were amazed and suspicious about my lack of knowledge. To this day, as I write in 2023, I still sometimes astonish people by how little I know about current popular subjects.





After living in Larkhall Rise, Clapham for a few months and suffering some police harassment I moved back to Glastonbury (in 1983 when I had just turned 30) where I lived at number 7a The High Street, upstairs from the Gothic Image shop. Seven-A (as we called it) was a bizarre experience in itself which I write about elsewhere.

I did volunteer work at Glastonbury Assembly Rooms and subsequently joined a drama team working for Children's World. I read a lot about anarchism. I remained pacifist until 1986 by which time it was clear to me that both anarchism and pacifism had some elements of naivety which needed to be addressed. If my dad's generation had all been pacifists there would have been no-one to demolish the Nazis and we would all be either exterminated by the death camps or made into slaves. I believe I would have realised this a lot sooner if I hadn't already been made a slave in Leo's Emin for seven years. Similarly in the anarchist dream of a world where people make up their own rules and practise mutual support we would once again have all been captured into slavery by the Mafia, the Yakuza, The Fascists etc. and all the various gangs which would take advantage of our lack of coherent organisation.

Of course, to some extent this has already happened but we have to build resistance rather than dozing into the pipe dream of Utopia.